

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 0203

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: ELAB, PINS, ET
SUBJ: ETHIOPIAN TRADE UNION MARKS FIRST ANNIVERSARY

SUMMARY: ALL ETHIOPIAN TRADE UNION (AETU) FIRST VICE CHAIRMAN GEDLU TEKLE HELD PRESS CONFERENCE JAN 9 TO COMMERORATE ESTABLISHMENT OF AETU ONE YEAR AGO. GEDLU NOTED AETU HAS LOST TWO CHAIRMEN AND TREASURER THROUGH ASSASSINATION, BUT THAT CURRENT RED TERROR CAMPAIGN PRODUCING REMARKABLE RESULTS. AETU HAS EVOLVED ALONG MODEL OF TRADE UNIONS IN STATE-CONTROLLED ECONOMIES WHERE WORKERS HAVE LITTLE SAY ABOUT WAGES AND BENEFITS, BUT DO HAVE IMPACT ON WORKING CONDITIONS. AS POLITICAL TOOL OF PROVISIONAL MILITARY ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL (PMAC), AETU HAS ASSUMED INCREASINGLY GREATER RESPONSIBILITY FOR POLITICIZING WORKERS AND OTHER MASS ORGANIZATION MEMBERS. THIS IN TURN HAS MADE AETU LEADERS PRIME ASSASSINATION TARGETS OF LEFTIST CIVILIAN OPPOINENTS OF PMAC. END SUMMARY.

1. CONCLUDING TURBULENT YEAR FOR AETU WHICH SAW ASSASSINATION OF ORIGINAL CHAIRMAN TWEODROS BEKELE (FEB) AND HIS REPLACEMENT TEMESGEN MADEBO (SEPT), AS WELL AS TREASURER KEBEDE GEBRE-MIKAEL (NOV), AETU FIRST VICE-CHAIRMAN GEDLU TEKLE ASSERTED AETU HAD EMERGED
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POWERFUL FROM THE CONTINUING STRUGGLE. THOUSANDS OF WORKERS NOW AMONG VANGUARD DEFENDING ETHIOPIA'S TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY AGAINST SOMALIA. WORKERS ALSO ACTIVELY PARTICIPATING IN RED TERROR CAMPAIGN, WHICH GEDLU STATED PRODUCING REMARKABLE RESULTS, BUT WHICH SHOULD BE STEPPED-UP UNTIL ALL COUNTER-REVOLUTIONARY AND ANTI-UNITY FORCES COMPLETELY WIPED OUT.

2. SO THAT AETU CAN PAVE WAY FOR CREATION OF WORKERS' PARTY, IT IS MAINTAINING LINKS WITH OTHER MASS ORGANIZATIONS, LIKE FARMERS' AND URBAN DWELLERS' (KEBELE) ASSOCIATIONS WHICH OPERATE THROUGHOUT COUNTRY. INTERNATIONALLY, WORKERS IN "PROGRESSIVE" COUNTRIES HAVE BUILT STRONG LINKS WITH THEIR ETHIOPIAN CLASS ALLIES AND ARE EXTENDING POLITICAL, MORAL AND MATERIAL SUPPORT TO AETU. AETU WILL CONTINUE TO STRENGTHEN THESE TIES.

3. COMMENT: ALMOST SINCE ITS INCEPTION AETU HAS LIMITED ITS ACTIVITIES, EITHER FORCIBLY OR BY CHOICE, TO POLITICIZATION OF WORKERS AND NON-WAGE DEMANDS. BECAUSE OF THE FLUID POLITICAL SITUATION AMONG THE CIVILIANS, AETU HAS BEEN INDOCTRINATING, AETU HAS MOVED FROM ONE PMAC-SANCTIONED MARXIST-LENINIST FACTION TO ANOTHER WITHOUT MAINTAINING ANY REAL INDEPENDENCE. RATHER THAN BE AN ADVOCATE OF WORKER DEMANDS, AETU HAS BECOME A POLITICAL AND SOMETIMES SECURITY TOOL OF THE PMAC. IT APPEARS THAT PMAC WILL USE AETU TO FILL GAPS IN CADRE FORMATION PROGRAM LEFT SINCE JULY '77 BY DECLINE OF ALL ETHIOPIAN SOCIALIST MOVEMENT (AESM OR ME'I SONE). HOWEVER, AETU'S LACK OF TRAINED IDEOLOGUES AND HIGHLY EDUCATED MANAGERS WILL ONLY CONTRIBUTE TO ITS DEPENDENCE ON PMAC SUPPORT.

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PORT FOR ITS CONTINUED SURVIVAL. AS A CIVILIAN ARM OF THE PMAC, ALL AETU LEADERS ARE PROSPECTIVE ASSASSINATION TARGETS.
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